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C O N F I D E N T I A L TEGUCIGALPA 000431

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NSC FOR DIRECTOR RESTREPO

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/08/2019

TAGS: PREL OAS KSUM CU HO

SUBJECT: ZELAYA SHARES DETAILS ON OAS CUBA RESOLUTION
NEGOTIATIONS

REF: TEGUCIGALPA 405 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Ambassador Hugo Llorens for reasons 1.4 (b & d).

11. (C) President Manuel & Mel Zelaya shared details in a June a 7 meeting with the Ambassador, accompanied by the DCM, on his negotiations with ALBA members and Cuba over the negotiations on Cuba at the Organization of American States General Assembly in San Pedro Sula June 2 and 3. Zelaya said that his goal on the negotiations was to take everyone's interest into account; he said that while the negotiations were difficult, he believed that he had met his goal. Zelaya praised Secretary Hillary Clinton for her work during the General Assembly, adding that he thought that in their second and last meeting she had made a very convincing and powerful case for the U.S. position, which had impacted greatly on him. In fact, he said, that while he and many other OAS members quickly realized the value of the U.S. offer to support a resolution dropping the Cuba ban as long as it included a requirement that Cuba apply for membership and that membership be contingent on Cuba adhering to OAS principles, convincing fellow ALBA members to accept the text had been difficult. Zelaya said that the reason he was unable to provide the U.S. delegation with a text the night of June 2 was due to ALBA intransience. Zelaya said that he spoke with President Hugo Chavez, Daniel Ortega and other ALBA members to press them to accept the compromise draft, eventually threatening to withdraw Honduras from ALBA if they did not agree (please protect). He said that he had told Chavez and Ortega that as hosts of the Assembly the lack of agreement would be a major disaster for him personally and for his government. Zelaya also said that he had made one final call to Fidel Castro, who gave his approval of the draft. By the morning of June 3, Zelaya said ALBA members changed their positions and agreed to accept the draft.

¶2. (C) Zelaya also spoke of the difficulty of dealing with the ALBA presidents who visited or wanted to visit the assembly. Zelaya said that President Daniel Ortega insisted on speaking at the inaugural session of the assembly, which the GOH controlled. Zelaya said, however, that, true to his word to us (reftel), only OAS Secretary General Jose Miguel Insulza and he spoke. He said that he offered Ortega instead a press conference after the inaugural session, to which Ortega eventually agreed. President Rafael Correa, who was in Honduras for a bilateral visit before and during the visit, also demanded a speaking role and decided not to attend the assembly when Zelaya refused. Chavez also pressed him for a speaking role, Zelaya said, and in the end did not attend.

¶3. (C) Comment: Zelaya found himself trapped between his desire to please both the U.S. and his ALBA friends at the OAS. The need to produce a successful assembly won out, however, and Zelaya successfully pressured ALBA to accept our text. The Secretary's presence was important, as Zelaya wants good relations with the new administration and wanted her visit to be successful. Zelaya kept his word to us on not allowing any of the ALBA presidents to speak at the assembly, at some effort according to his version. We note, however, that had he not issued them invitations, he would not have had to fend off their speaking requests.

LLORENS